

**PARKS, SPORTS & CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
OF THE
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE**

Minutes

A regular meeting of the Parks, Sports & Cultural Affairs Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York, on **July 31, 2003** at 12:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Legislator Ginny Fields - Chairperson
Legislator Jon Cooper - Vice Chairman
Legislator Angie Carpenter
Legislator Brian Foley
Legislator Lynne Nowick
Legislator Angie Carpenter

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Paul Sabatino, II - Counsel to the Legislature
Alexander B. Sullivan - Chief Deputy of the Legislature
Steve Raptoulis - Deputy Commissioner Parks Department
Judy Gordon - Commissioner of Suffolk County Parks
Catherine Stark, County Executive's Office
Ray Zaccaro, Aide to Legislator Bishop
Sean Clancy, Budget Review Office
Erin Barbara, Aide to Legislator Fields
Frank Tassone, Aide to Legislator Crecca
Bill Johnson, Vice Pres. Of Suffolk Committee for Camping
Carolyn Fahey, Suffolk County Economic Development
Michelle Isabelle-Stark Suff. Cty. Development - Cultural Affairs
Barbara Kenney, South Shore Soccer Club
Ann Maguire, Little Red School House
Mary Anne Jedrlinic, Appointee, Vanderbilt Museum Commission
Roger Podd, Aide to Presiding Officer Postal
Robert Baumann, SASI & NYSR & PA, Inc.
Bob Seyfarth, Suff. Cty. Dept. of Health Services
Salvatore Pentecoste, The Lightening Bug
Ronan Mulvey, Citizens Advisory Board
Joseph Pena, President of Lightening Bug Camper
Ed Hogan, Aide to Legislator Nowick
Jim Spero, Budget Review Office
John Ortiz, Budget Review Office
David Bishop, Legislator, Dist. #14
All other interested parties.

Minutes taken by:
Eileen Schmidt, Legislative Secretary

(THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 12:05 P.M.)

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

We will start the Parks Committee meeting of July 31st. We will begin the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Alden.

SALUTATION

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Okay. We a number of cards; we'll begin with Robert Baumann, oh, there you are in the back.

MR. BAUMANN:

Good afternoon, Madam Chair Lady, ladies and gentlemen of the committee and respected citizens. My name is Bob Baumann, I'm here representing SASI which is the Suffolk Alliances Sportsman and as Regional Director for the New York State Rifle and Pistol Association. As has been my obligation, pleasant obligation on several previous occasions I'm here to ask the committee to continue its tremendous efforts toward ultimately reopening the Suffolk County Trap and Skeet range as soon as possible. And to commend you for your efforts in that regard and especially to thank your Chair Lady for her efforts towards that end. Thank you. Any questions?

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Thank you. It's funny that you're here today because on our agenda we have a segment where we're going to ask the Commissioner to come up and give us an update on where we are with Suffolk Trap and Skeets. So if you will bear with us we'll all hear where we are. Thank you. Next card is Bill Johnson, Suffolk Committee for Camping.

MR. JOHNSON:

Good afternoon and thank you for giving me this opportunity to talk today. My name is Bill Johnson and I'm the Vice President of the Suffolk Committee for Camping also known as the SCC. We are a non-profit and a non-partisan organization and we represent the camping community of Suffolk County. We meet monthly at the Ecology Center in Holtsville. Our mission is to encourage family camping and preserve the values that it promotes.

We host an annual kick off and rally at the Cathedral Pines each year that is attended by over 400 camping units in excess of 2500 people. I am here today on behalf of our membership to discuss a situation that exist in our parks today that we thought had been corrected several months ago. Our members have expressed concern over the policy of restricting access to our parks for campers.

Of all the Suffolk County Parks that offer camping, Blydenburgh, Cathedral Pines, and Southaven have restricted access for camping to five days. After the Legislature has allocated funds to the parks last spring we were under the impression that the parks would resume their normal schedule and be backup to full capacity. We feel that the present schedule is not full capacity.

The past few years have been very good for RV dealers. They have all reported that their sales have been much higher than in recent years. All aspects of recreational vehicles and the industry associated with it has also reported an increase in camping and industries associated with it. I

find it strange that with all this renewed interest in camping that a decision was made to reduce the days available in our parks. We should be promoting camping in our parks and trying to persuade campers to spend their time and their money in our parks in our counties instead of making it more difficult for them to camp.

There is a three-page article in today's Newsday on the joys of camping. It's a very good article and it's about New York State's Parks, Hither Hills in particular, I believe. In today's world of electronic gizmos and mind numbing video games camping remains a perfect vehicle to preserve the family values that camping represents. We should be encouraging camping not discouraging it. I don't know if any of you camp, but if you haven't I'll ask you to visit a campground and walk through it. You'll be surprised at what hear. You won't hear the binging, the banging, the booming or any of the other noises that are driving us loony today. What you'll hear instead is conversations, yes, conversations. Conversations between fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, friends and friends. And pretty soon as you walk through you too will be caught into a conversation and a discussion of anything from the weather to what's wrong with our parks today. You see all of us thought that conversation and person to person interaction was lost today, but it really isn't lost it just went camping.

In closing I'd like to say that the Suffolk Committee for Camping is opposed to closing any of our parks. We want our parks available seven days a week as advertised and we expect you as our representatives to do everything in your power to see that the camping and the family values associated with it is not compromised. We would like to go on record as being opposed to the closing of any of our parks. Restricting access to any of our parks or otherwise reducing the amount of days available to our members and their families for camping. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Thank you. Does anyone have any questions? Thank you. Barbara Kenney, the South Shore Soccer Club.

MS. KENNEY:

Good afternoon and thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak before you. My name is Barbara Kenney and I'm the President of the South Shore Soccer Club also known as the West Babylon Soccer Club an organization that provides over 850 children between the ages of four and nine with a safe environment which to learn and enjoy the game of soccer. The program's membership, it's players are just not West Babylon residents. They are from townships as far west as Massapequa, as far east as Islip and as far north as Commack.

The South Shore Soccer Club, through a licensing agreement with the County uses Van Bourgondien Park as a home for its program which runs approximately eight months out of the year. Although it may seem that the current configuration of the park would provide adequate field space for the needs of the players only 80% of the program is able to practice and play on those fields. The balance of the program is farmed out to the West Babylon School District fields, which have become over crowded do to increased enrollment and the establishment of additional school teams. Community youth organizations are only permitted use of school facilities after all school functions have been completed. That means that community youth organization games cannot be played until after 1 P.M. on Saturday and practice cannot take place until after 5 PM weekdays. Not to mention the fact that parents with more than one child playing in the program must either split themselves up or single parent households must find adequate car pool arrangements when their children are playing home games on two different fields.

By opening the treed area at Van Bourgondien Park and creating additional fields an entire

program can be housed there. Parents will find comfort in all of their children being in one place and school fields will become available for other uses. The treed area has become a hang out for drug and alcohol abuse, a place for homeless not to mention a dumping ground for debris. This property needs to be put to better use.

During my 23 years of experience as a volunteer in this program I have watched as fields -- field availability in the Town of Babylon has become a major issue for every community youth program. Fields require refurbishment and when they are shutdown to do this, where do the programs go? This spring, after being granted the use of four acres of land at Our Lady of Grace Church, the soccer club was approached by the Town of Babylon with a field shortage situation. A local lacrosse program had no where to play. The soccer club agreed to the lacrosse program's use of the field at the church. After all, aren't we doing this for our children?

Van Bourgondien Park has become a fine example of what a successful partnership between community organizations and local government can be. During the last five or six years the South Shore Soccer Club has established a lawn maintenance program with a local field maintenance firm which fertilizes and seeds and maintains the field at a cost of approximately \$15 to 16,000 per year. All of the money raised in our concession pays for the maintenance, which allows our program money to be spent on the children. The Town of Babylon cuts the grass, picks up the garbage and does repairs and maintenance which this season has included restripping of the parking lot, replacement of the playground equipment while the County has helped in the repair of the irrigation system that was so desperately needed.

In the last two years the Town of Babylon summer soccer program has run at Van Bourgondien. In keeping with the partnership the soccer club has volunteered to line the fields and provided soccer goal posts and nets. During the fall and spring seasons, there are several women's soccer teams that apply throughout the town for -- I'm sorry, through the town for the use of the park's full size field. The soccer club arranges its Sunday schedule to allow time for these teams as well. Fields are in short supply.

In closing, I urge you to approve this proposal and send it on its way for a vote. Communities need a place to play. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Thank you. Any questions? Okay. Thank you very much. The next speaker is Ann Maguire regarding the Little Red School House.

MS. MAGUIRE:

Good afternoon. I was hoping that I would be able to come here today and bring good news that we had spoken to Allan Binder to get a resolution to have this building dedicated the way it was suppose to many years ago. But there seems to be a problem, Mr. Binder won't speak to us so we're kind of at a halt. I went to his office we've made phone calls. So what do you do when your Legislator won't talk to you?

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

You remember it at election time.

MS. MAGUIRE:

Oh, I will believe me.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

I guess on your behalf as the chair of the committee I will write him a letter stating that you have reached out to him numerous times without any response and would he please contact you. And I'll give him a copy of your card so that he can reach you. It does have a phone number and it does have an address.

MS. MAGUIRE:

Could I ask you, there was a list of questions that were submitted by the Library Committee asking for answers and it was passed on to the attorney's. Have the questions been answered and could I find out what the answers were?

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Commissioner Gordon.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

(inaudible)

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Okay. We will hear from the Commissioner.

MS. MAGUIRE:

Okay. Then my other concern is I believe September 1st. the Art League is hoping to be in their new building and then Elwood people are going to be left with an empty building that is falling apart and what are we going to do about it? Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Thank you. Ronan Mulvey. We did appoint Mr. Mulvey; he is here to give us -- they promised to give us an update on cultural affairs every quarter and I believe that's what you're here to do.

MR. MULVEY:

Thank you for having me. I made copies of the letter I gave to you with the enclosure. Do you want me to hand that out?

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

My aide will come and get it and hand it out; you can continue to speak and she'll pick it up for you.

MR. MULVEY:

I'm Ronan Mulvey and I'm with the Citizens Advisory Board for the Arts and I've been on that committee for four years now at least since the year 2000. And the function of the committee as you know is to make the allocation of money for the arts and make the recommendation for allocation, which eventually is approved by the Legislator. What I've come up with is changes that I'd like to see in the Chapter 68 of the Suffolk County Code which was created under Local Law #8-1978 that would make it I believe a better operation and an improved operation. And I'll read from my write up; making these changes would increase (I'm giving now this is the rationale to support it) making these changes would increase the maximum members of the Citizens Advisory Board from 15 to 18. The change would increase the size of the Board to allow a member from each legislative district. Currently we have 15 people allowed on the Board and of

them there's probably 11 of those seats have been filled, but I think we can improve it if we assure that there is a representative from every legislative district. That would ensure that everywhere in the Suffolk County there is a representative sitting at their Board not only to support all Suffolk County, but to support the arts events that are occurring in their area.

Increasing the Board members involvement in the non-profit organization in their district will better serve the legislator would better serve the art organizations in the area. And it would make sure that we have a total representation in there. At present too, I think we should start taking a look at the distribution of funding throughout the entire County looking at each area to ensure that each area serves somebody equally not as a hard rule, but just to make it one of the consideration that the Art Advisory Board makes when its sitting down looking at the applications. Now I sat through many of these reviews. We're sitting down there we have approximately 100 applications. I think last year is was 110 and it's six hour review time that gives you about three minutes to each application which the person submitting the application probably spend 80 hours or a 100 hours or whatever it took them to do it. It's a very quick review and many times we do not know when we're looking that application nobody is sitting there is familiar with that organization. If you give the responsibility to the representative on the Board from that district to make sure that everybody that day whoever they are that's the representative has a personal knowledge of the organizations. We breakdown that most representatives on the Board, but maybe only five or six organizations to look at. Some would run a little high; some a little low, but at least that would have sat down talked to these people. Help them fill out the applications if necessary and maybe cleanup some of the errors and things that occur that are on the application before it even comes here.

So what I'm trying to do -- and that is the intent of the current law. If you read the law it clearly states that you should represent both the local and the overall Suffolk County. And I believe in this way, the overall functions of the Citizens Advisory Board would be approved. Do you want me to go into the details of how I'd like each law changed?

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

No. I think it's very clear; it's clear to me on what you handed out which is appreciated. Unless anyone else has a -- no. So this would be excellent. We'll review it and maybe we'll discuss it and if it's agreed upon by the committee. Perhaps we'll put in a resolution to make those changes co-sponsored by everyone on the committee.

MR. MULVEY:

Oh, that would be excellent.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Okay.

MR. MULVEY:

Thank you. Would I find that out by attending the next committee meeting --

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

I will have my aide remind me to call you as soon as we discuss it with the committee and then we'll let you know what we're doing. I appreciate you coming though; thank you very, very much.

MR. MULVEY:

Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

You're a nice active participant in this committee and thank you we appreciate it. The next speaker is Salvatore Pentecoste.

MR. PENTECOSTE:

Good afternoon everyone. As you can see I'm dressed for camping, but I have no place to go. A couple of months ago I spoke to the committee here in reference to camping. I spend all my money upstate New York, Pennsylvania -- any place I can go camping, but because of medical conditions my driving is curtailed a little bit. I have grandchildren to go camping with, three granddaughters, and two grandsons. I teach them camping and I want to go camping here on Long Island. I spend a lot of my money in the summer months in Riverhead -- Indian Island Park -- Cathedral Pines a wonderful place. In our group we are very clean, self-supporting. We make sure we leave the park the same condition that it came in. With the closing of the parks or the number of days you go camping you're curtailing me from doing anything. I can pick up my grandchildren now and say let's go camping, they would go, but the idea is when, where and what days you're open and what days you're closed?

I represent the Long Island -- I'm sorry, the Lightening Bugs. We light the way for the campers. We want to spend as much time in Long Island as possible. Number one, we'd rather spend our money here. I'll be running the Octoberfest. I'll be running the Polish Festival here in Indian Island Park. I'm the so called wagon master that day and I'm in charge of our group. And we have all the people in our camping club coming in. We want to camp in Long Island; we want to spend our money here. The money should stay here in Suffolk County not upstate New York, not in Canada, not in Pennsylvania. So I'm here to say please keep the parks open and let me bring my grandchildren in. They are our future campers and they're going to be your future people that will elected everybody to the board and politics and etc. And my grandchildren, especially my nine year old granddaughter, she loves the camping especially when we go to Indian Island Park. I take her fishing there; whatever fish we get we're lucky, but I'm teaching her camping. We bring our own racks; we clean the park when we leave. We are self-supporting and the reason I'm bringing this up to -- a lot of my friends are golfers. Now I don't know how much a square inch it cost to maintain a golf park, but I can tell you how much it cost to square inch for camping. All we need is the custodian there to register when we come in and the park man that picks up the garbage. A lot of times I'll take the black bag and bring it home. I have a gigantic cesspool inside my house to bring my own waste. So everything I'm doing to keep the park clean is being done and so is all members of my camping club. So please let the parks stay open for as long as you possibly can.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Just to respond on behalf of this body we did put in a resolution to re-open the County Parks. It was passed, but that has been ignored. It is not the Legislature that is closing the parks.

MR. PENTECOSTE:

I know that.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

We have put in money and we made sure that the money was already in the budget and it has been a different decision, not the Legislature's.

MR. PENTECOSTE:

Can I interrupt you for a minute, dear? By the way I'm so use to yes, dear and no, dear. My wife's got me trained.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

I kind of like the dear.

MR. PENTECOSTE:

Why is it they have money for the golfers, but no money for the campers? That's the part that's bugging me.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

We're going to hear from the Commissioner in a couple of minutes and maybe we can get some of those answers.

MR. PENTECOSTE:

Okay. Now the second group of people I represent is the United Shooting Club of Long Island Incorporated. We are losing members only because we have no place to shoot and if we do find a place shoot the neighbors are complaining about the noise. We make sure now we don't shoot early in the morning. Now we wait till 10:30, 11:00 o'clock we get our group together. We're losing a lot of members to the Peconic Sportsman's Club. I tried for an application I think it's going to take me six or seven years before I get on there maybe, I'm too old. I'm 74½ years old right now and can't wait that long, okay. So I'm looking to shoot locally, I believe the park is on Horseblock Road. I would like to see that open so this way I can shoot and we also train the kids. We have instructors; we have people who make sure that the weapons are handled the right way, etc. My group asks, please let us go shooting. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Thank you very much for taking the time to come out and address us. Georgia Lheron regarding the Little Red School House.

MS. LHERON:

Good afternoon. I know that you're going to address the issue of the Little Red School House, but I hope in the addressing I could find out what the status is, whether its parkland or not cause I know that is something they were deciding. And what is the status of the negotiation between the Elwood Public Library and Suffolk County? And is there a plan for the School House and what is it? In March I brought you pictures of the horrible condition of the School House. It's now four months later and they're holding children's summer programs there and I drove past there this morning and I don't see that any repairs at all have been done. The stoop is still just as broken and \$6,000 worth of rent has been collected over the four months which would have at least fixed the stoop so it that it wasn't a liability. I myself am a landlord and if I had a building in this kind of deplorable condition I think the town would be on my back about it.

I would stop there on the way here to just to check to see what had been done so I could have the most recent update. And I had also brought to your attention the dumping that's being done behind this School House which nothing has been done to clean it up. And because nothing has been done and the School House looks neglected the people who own the property next to this School House who had originally done a little dumping have now done ten times more. There now is a wall of broken concrete and debris and more of their yard waste has been bulldozed by one of the bobcats into Suffolk County property. Now their property is nice and clean and devoid

of tree stumps and trees which are also piled up in a big long line along the new fence. And now the cost of cleaning this property is going to be ten times more than it was before because its been neglected.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Legislator Alden.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

If we can determine that the debris, the stumps and the concrete came from that other property number one, that's a criminal act and number two, it's a civil act that can be punished both criminally and with civil penalties. And we can recoup the cost of that kind of clean ups. So I'm pretty sure that the Commissioner hearing those comments is probably going to call the Police Department or send her own Park Police out to investigate that because that's something where Suffolk County can actually recoup.

MS. LHERON:

Yes. I was going to ask you to do that because I had given the pictures of the before so you have a very good case. And I'd like to see them prosecuted because there is I mean, there's weeds and stuff where you would have access from the School House and there is no trace that anyone has ever used the School House as access.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

If as you say if there's tracks of a little cat or something pushing things from one property to the other I'm sure that that we can establish a little bit of a, you know, evidence that would indicate they are the responsible party.

MS. LHERON:

Okay. Thank you. And in closing I -- Ann Maguire has said she has tried to contact Legislator Binder, I too have had no luck whatsoever and I would appreciate my name being added to any correspondence. I was at his office for a meeting and gave him a list of questions I had about the School House and never got a response. I tried e-mailing him and it was too successful so I stopped by and I specifically asked for a response I didn't even get a yes, I have received this. So I too would like to be included in that. We had a meeting scheduled that was cancelled and wasn't rescheduled so I would appreciate some kind of a -- so that -- cause we're trying to have it dedicated and everyone says, talk to your Legislator, but we're not having too much luck.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Okay. I will make sure that in my letter to Legislator Binder that your name and address and hopefully phone number is included with that letter that he has ignored you. Thank you. We have Michelle Isabelle-Stark and then I understand we also have Mary Anne Jedrlnic. You'll correct me on the pronunciation so we'll have you follow.

MS. ISABELLE-STARK:

Good afternoon. At the Chair's request our department was --

MS. SCHMIDT:

Please state your name.

MS. ISABELLE-STARK:

Oh, my name is Michelle Isabelle-Stark. At the Chair's request our department was asked for an update of the cultural affairs program at today's meeting. So I thought I'd just give you a brief overview of what I've been doing the last couple of months. 90% of the 80 grant recipients I've met with personally to have them sign their contracts with the County. And there are eight remaining that I still have to get to. I've met with the advisory board which includes Ronan Mulvey who's very active and that's going well. We're trying to refine the program to make it more efficient and better for our arts groups.

I have gone to virtually every theater in Suffolk County and then personally with the executive directors to find out what their issues are and how we can help them better. I've created an audit form that will be used next year 2004 where the Arts Advisory Board or myself and/or myself will actually go to the performances of our grant recipients and audit their performance. And so we will have something that's measurable. Up to now we haven't actually had formal auditing or measurement of the program.

I'm also responsible for promoting film developments in Suffolk County. And I have talked to many of the town and village clerks who issue film permits throughout the County to develop a method where they can automatically forward me their permits so that I can start keeping track of the production in Suffolk County which is substantial. The (inaudible) multiplier effect of both film of both film making and cultural arts is significant; it's between two and three. To give you an example we had one feature film that was in Montauk for seven days. Their budget for those seven days was \$7 million.

There is an article in Newsday yesterday, which talked about the positive economic impact to small businesses of the film making business in the County. So -- and I've also created a monthly newsletter for our arts organizations informing them about various work shops I'll be doing and grant opportunities that they might not be aware of.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Could you forward all of the work that you're doing to the committee so that we can share it with the committee members also?

MS. ISABELLE-STARK:

Sure, I'd be happy to do that. So that's pretty much where I'm at right now.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

It's a lot.

MS. ISABELLE-STARK:

Yeah, it's a lot.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Thank you.

MS. ISABELLE-STARK:

You're welcome.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Obviously, you're doing a great job and we do appreciate it because in the years that I've been on the Parks Committee, number one, we never gotten any reports really of cultural affairs. And

number two, certainly we didn't realized what went into it and how much can go into it. On behalf of the committee we thank you for all of the work that you're doing and please pass that on to your boss who we are very happy with. Thank you very, very much.

MS. ISABELLE-STARK:

Great. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Mary Ann, come on up. This is on IR 1161 appointing Mary Anne --

MS. JEDRLINIC:

Jedrlinic.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Okay. As a member of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum Commission.

MS. JEDRLINIC:

Hi, good afternoon. I was not expecting to speak, but I'd like to say I'm looking forward to being a member of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum Commission. That's about it.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Can you give us a little bit about your background?

MS. JEDRLINIC:

Currently, I'm a Spanish teacher at Candlewood Middle School in Dix Hills, New York. I've been there for two years. Prior to that I'd been a teacher at St. John the Baptist Diocesan High School in West Islip for two years. Prior to that I was home for ten years taking care of my three children and before that I was in advertising and marketing, vice president for a big cooperation.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

And do you know what you're going to be able to do to help the Vanderbilt?

MS. JEDRLINIC:

Quite frankly, this is my first experience doing something like this. I will say that I have brought my children to the Vanderbilt Museum continually for the past ten years and I consider it to be a miniature Museum of Natural History right around the corner. I went to a fundraiser about two years ago and it's a great place. So I look forward to doing it.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Legislator Carpenter.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

Hi, nice to see you and thank you for accepting the challenge. If you are appointed I just have a very practical question. You have checked on when the board meets and are able to make a commitment to the meeting because they do monitor attendance?

MS. JEDRLINIC:

Sure. I think they meet on Thursday, I'm not sure when they meet.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

Okay. Because that would be something I think is important to check.

MS. JEDRLINIC:

No, they meet in the evenings.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

Oh, I'm very much aware of that.

MS. JEDRLINIC:

I know they meet in the evenings once a month.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

They do meet in the evenings and the meetings having been a member of the board many years ago they meetings can go on, you know, pretty lengthily, but also there are committees that they expect board members to participate in. So it's probably a commitment of two or three evenings a month if you get involved in the committees. So it just would be important to know that before you started that you could know exactly when it meets and that it isn't a conflict for you, but thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Anyone else? Legislator Cooper.

LEGISLATOR COOPER:

You may have answered this as to the best of your ability at this point, but I was just wondering what drove you express interest in joining the Vanderbilt Museum Commission? I understand that you've attended the museum and your children enjoy the museum, but it is a fair amount of commitment on your part. And I'm just wondering why you decided at this point to join and exactly what it is that you believe that you can contribute to the commission?

MS. JEDRLINIC:

Well, quite frankly, a friend of my asked me if I would be interested in doing this and I thought I would be. What I can contribute I don't really know other than I have a lot of experience in business and teaching now and I love the museum. That's about it.

LEGISLATOR COOPER:

Well, thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Legislator Carpenter.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

I think your background as an educator and in advertising and marketing will be very, very helpful because that's one of the areas that I found that often times the museum was a little bit lacking. Not so much the education, but in the marketing of the institution especially to those of us who live on the south shore. So it's that much more important I think for someone like yourself who lives in Babylon and it's going to be a little bit of a trip to go to those meetings over in Centerport. But I think it's very important to keep that, you know, when people that you're involved with on a daily basis hear of your involvement it will spark interest from those who live on the south shore to get more involved.

MS. JEDRLINIC:

That's a good point because I kind of stumbled on the museum almost my accident just driving around one day. And I know there have been a lot of improvements made to it over the last five to six years.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Legislator Nowick.

LEGISLATOR NOWICK:

You know Mary Anne, I always feel for somebody that's standing there and being put on the spot and being asked what can you do. But what you're not even telling us is that -- I'm hearing you say you've been there with your children for ten years which says to me you're very familiar with the museum. You know what might be good for the museum and what not be because you are -- you actually go there so you're not even hearing yourself and that's what I like to hear. You've been there, you go there; you're with your family so to me that's says you're interested.

MS. JEDRLINIC:

Thank you.

LEGISLATOR NOWICK:

So I appreciate someone who's knows about the museum.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Legislator Alden.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

Hi. Thanks a lot for coming down and actually -- thank you for stepping up because really that's what we need is a lot of volunteers to get involved. I think it's a real good partnership between the public and governmental and even business. And it seems like you're going to bring a little bit of business background and a background in fundraising. And I hope you're aware of like the demands that are going to be put on you because the museum really needs to expand its fundraising and, you know, as far as bringing dollars in whether they be grants from other sources or just, you know, other ideas that we can run an educational program and actually bring money in to pay for the educational program. And possibly, you know, a little bit left over to run other types of programs in the museum. So if you're bringing in that kind of background in there I hope you were informed that those are some of the demands that are going to be made on you, right?

MS. JEDRLINIC:

Well, to tell you the truth the idea of kind of dealing with a business aspect is very interesting to me because that's one thing that I miss in teaching.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

Good, because it is a museum and, you know, like we need people that are into the exhibits and all that kind stuff, but we also need some business heads in there too. So I think you'd be a very good addition to a trustee.

MS. JEDRLINIC:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Anyone else? Okay. I'm going to make a motion to take 1161 out of order seconded by Legislator Carpenter. All in favor? Opposed? Approved and I will make a motion to 1161 seconded by Legislator Carpenter. All in favor? Opposed? Approved. Thank you very much. You are now officially a member --

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

No. Not yet.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Oh, on Tuesday.

LEGISLATOR NOWICK:

It only gets easier.

MS. JEDRLINIC:

This is worst than going to a school board meeting.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

No, no, it's not. Believe me it's not.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

The only problem you're going to have is with your sponsor's name being on this. They'll be a little debate on that, but you'll ultimately be approved I think.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

And I would tell you that you do not have to be present at the meeting on Tuesday. Generally, what we would like to do is have appointments and re-appointments come before the committee so that we can pass on our recommendations to the full Legislature that we have interrogated you. And we asked you some questions that we feel are sufficiently answered to appoint you as member. So I think you'll be fine and we appreciate especially the salary that you take as being a member. So thank you very, very much.

MS. JEDRLINIC:

Thank you very much and have a great afternoon.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Thank you, you too. Okay. Commissioner Gordon I guess we'll have you come up. All right the first discussion that we have is the re-opening of County Parkland. Let me just say that when we discussed that you're going to close some parks we asked you at a couple of the meetings what it would take to reopen them. And you responded that it would take being able to replace certain members that you had lost and we checked with our Budget Review Office who stated that the money was in your budget. And then you had a press conference saying that you were reopening the County Parks. So as far as everyone here is concerned we were all under the understanding that the parks would be reopened, services would resume. And that it was our intent to have that followed through on so it was a surprise when I got a couple of calls from a few of the campers saying that they were told to leave. They were there over the weekend and were told that they had to leave at the close of day because the park would be closed or the camping would be closed in the parkground.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

Madam Chairman, could I just add one quick note to that?

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Yes.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

I was a little bit dismayed because one of these complainants was a constituent of mine and actually went further than just saying that they were asked to leave. They actually said, the park is being closed and this is what they related to me was told to them by an employee at Blydenburgh. The park is closed to campers between such a day and such a day and you have to leave now and that's because of the Suffolk County Legislator. So if you have a problem with that I suggest you take it up with your Legislator.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

And that was passed on to me from a couple of people and it is outrageous especially after all that we've been doing in this committee to try to get the parks open to our constituents. And the name of the bill that we put in was directing the reopening of County Parks.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

It was at Blydenburgh?

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Yes, it was Blydenburgh.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Is there a superinten -- supervisor/superintendent at that park?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

We have a park supervisor, yes.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Okay. Does a park supervisor, if I may Madam Chair, communications I imagine flow from the superintendent, the supervisor to the employees. I mean, this really is more than just bothersome, you know, this committee has really worked hard for the Parks Department and actually for the public to utilize our parks. Have you had the opportunity -- is this the first that you've heard of --

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

No, no, it's not the first time.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Well, I'll wait for the chair, but if you could lend -- has this been pursued at all?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Yes.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Okay. And could we, Madam Chair, whenever you're ready to hear it, can you tell us how this was pursued to, number one, correct that? And also to find out how that kind of, I guess won't say misinformation, but how that lie was perpetrated within that particular campground.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Well, I think that I placed a call to Mr. Gaffney's Office when I heard about it and they weren't even aware that the park was closed a couple of days a week. So that was very disconcerting. And then I have a letter here that a constituent wrote that says that the closing of the campgrounds makes it uncomfortable for many of the residents of Suffolk County who've used the park grounds -- campgrounds seven days a week throughout. And over the years whereas the park campgrounds have always been open seven days a week during the summer months. The County is losing money by closing them where they have to leave and use state parks and the state parks are open seven days a week for campers. And a couple of the people that I spoke to said that they were going to move out east and go camping out there in a state park campground and that money now is going to the state rather than to the County. And I know we've talked about alternative parks funding, but if we're going to turn around and say to our constituents that we don't want your money, but we're going to take it in another way that's upsetting also.

There is a comment here from the same person who says that the Department of Parks has a campground person living at the campsite seven days a week, 24 hours a day by the name of Steve {Mobray} in his trailer from Florida. And apparently he looks out at the campgrounds and just judging from comments that we've heard from people who utilize campgrounds that sounds to me like the kind of constituent you want to use our facilities. And why we would turn them away is beyond me, and why we would turn the revenue away is beyond me. So I guess I'm going to ask how this possibly happened after we asked what it would take to reopen them and have them utilized again.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Well, first of all I would just like to comment that none of the parks are closed. And going back to either December or January when we were first talking about this issue in this body I made comments about closing two park facilities completely where we could close and lock the gate and not allow anybody in. I talked about taking the showmobile off the road because we didn't have enough staff to cover the showmobile. We have cutback drastically on the number of special events that we do in the parks. Every year we do beach opening activities in all of our park facilities. We have not done that this year and the reason that we have not done these things is because of the lack of staff.

What we did when I said to reopen Lake Ronkonkoma and Sears Bellows County Park with the minimum way we could accomplish that was hiring six laborers. Laborers, who are entry level people on our career ladder. They're not park supervisors they're not people who necessarily have lots of experience running campgrounds, running a major beach facility or the like. But it did by hiring those six people we were able to move staff around and we did accomplish reopening Sear Bellow which by the way -- Sears Bellows which by the way is opened seven days a week. We made the decision not happily again, I mean, I would love to have all of these places opened seven days a week with all of the normal activities that we do. We'd have loved to continue with the special events programs that we have because that's a marketing tool for us. It helps us to get the word out about what we do in the parks. We couldn't do it. I sat here last year in front of this body and I told you I was making a commitment when I became Commissioner to provide clean safe parks. This is the way we can do it by curtailing some of the activities that we have. It's not as if we are not providing camping activities on a seven day a week basis for people. We do have other locations that are open for people on seven days a week. Some of them are more difficult to get into granted. Not everybody can get into Smith

Point, but we've got Cedar Point in East Hampton. We've got Indian Island in Riverhead. They are all open on a seven day a week operation. So for somebody to say that if they can't go to Blydenburgh they're going out east to go to a state park we have County parks that are available too.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Without a waiting list?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

I'm sorry.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Without a waiting list seven days a week?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Yes. During the week, yes. Absolutely. We've got available sites during the week definitely. To say that we have available sites all the time at Smith Point might be questionable that might not be the case because that's probably our most popular campground. But to address the issue that happened at Blydenburgh, I was as disturbed as you were Legislator Foley about hearing that because it should not have been said. And what I was told by the employee there was that there was a camping patron in the office when somebody came to complain and the camping patron made that comment. It was not an employee because if an employee had made that comment I would have handled it myself because that is absolutely unacceptable to say it about Legislator, to say it about me or to say about anybody including the County Executive.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Yes. One quick question. What does it take to reopen Lake Ronkonkoma County Park? What do they do over there that you had to --

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

One of the issues that we have at Lake Ronkonkoma -- why we -- as you know it's on the Lake we do not provide lifeguard protection; that's a concern to allow people in there with not staff in the park.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

So you don't have staff in that park?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

No. We do have staff in that park now.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

But what do they do?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

They clean the park. They make sure the bathrooms are clean. We've got people that collect money for the parking fee on the weekends.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Only on the weekends?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

I'm sorry.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Only on the weekends?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Only on the weekends. We only charge for parking on the weekends; we don't charge during the week.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Okay. so what do they do there during the week clean it, clean the bathrooms, empty the garbage?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

But they're just not at Lake Ronkonkoma. We've got other holdings around the area as well as we do at all of our -- most of our facilities.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Like what?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Stueben Blvd, I believe we have 30 some odd acres and I believe you have even gotten letters from people up in that area concerning dumping issues.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

My problem is this, what would it take to collect some money at Blydenburgh and maybe not have someone pick up the garbage that particular day for any hour or something, but be over --

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Legislator Fields, I don't feel comfortable having campers in the park on a twenty-four hour basis and we've got no supervision in that park. Sunday's we may have one full-time laborer --

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

What about the guy in the --

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

He's a seasonal employee. He's not a full-time park employee.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

But he's still there.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Yes, he is, but I'm not going to have a campground open with a seasonal employee making decisions on how to deal with issues. I don't think it's safe. It's not safe.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Go ahead, you can.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

You were talking about Lake Ronkonkoma before. Okay. I would just appreciate it if you'd looked into it a little bit further because the constituent that came in and made the complaint about the parks being closed related to me that it was a park employee. And I'm not sure how he identified the person as a park employee whether they had, you know, like a badge on or a uniform or something like that, but he was very, very clear. And very animated and very loud about the fact that it was a park employee that placed it right at my, you know placed the blame right on me for that park being closed.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Well, I did Legislator Alden and when I heard -- when I was told that it was a park patron I said well, -- and I further questioned and what I was told was that the park patron was in the office when this happened. So I assume, you know, somebody could have assumed being the fact that they were in the office; it's a very small office over at Blydenburgh. They might have assumed that they were employee -- an employee because they were inside the office.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

Okay. Just to go a couple of things further on Lake Ronkonkoma. Are these the only two that are closed Blydenburgh and Lake Ronkonkoma?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

No. Everything is opened, but we have curtailed camping activity at West Hills, Blydenburgh, Cathedral Pines and Southaven.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

Okay. Then --

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Outside of holiday weeks, the Memorial Day week we were opened seven days. Fourth of July we were open seven and we intend to be open seven days going into the Labor Day weekend.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

Okay. Just also for the record, I was a little surprise that we, you know, like curtailing anything because I was under the impression, you know, after one of last meetings that --

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

We did send -- I have a copy of a press release that was sent throughout the County to all the legislative offices with the schedule on it as it is on our website also. I mean, this is not something that we were trying to hide believe me.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

But we did ask you in the committee meeting when we got that what would it take to change this. What would it take to reopen them because it was because of that that we were concerned?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

No. This came out -- this is not closing Lake Ronkonkoma and Sears Bellows. This is all the parks being opened --

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

The schedule.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

-- with some curtailed activities.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

And we asked what it would take to reopen them.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

Almost all the management except I think there is a couple that are being investigated for criminal activity, but other than that all the management personnel is still in place. And I think that's what you told us at two Park Committee meetings. Do we need -- how many more seasonals do we need to open up all these on a full-time basis?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

I don't need more seasonals. I need more experienced staff. I need park supervisors. I need labor crew leader. I need people with some experience.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

Okay. Those people retired?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Yes. We had -- yes. People have retired. Yes. And we had additional retirements this year.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

How many did we have that retired this year?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

I believe we had two. And again, seasoned people with experience.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

Okay. But how many is your staff then if you're saying you had two? And then these are supervisors or these are like team leaders or what would you say?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Park Supervisor I, II or III.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

Okay. And we had two of those that retired.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Um'hum.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

All right. Again, --

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

This is not necessarily just the staff in the park also -- not just necessarily the staff in the park.

It also goes into the issue of us being critically short with Park Police by curtailing the activities in some locations we free up the Park Police to be in the other locations where we are open seven days a week.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

But unfortunately, --

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

One thing leads to another within the department.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

But we were chronically short on Park Police; we knew that five years ago we knew it last year we knew it ten years ago. And we've been getting, you know, I guess more and more short on Park Police, but we did our budget last year and when we go to our constituents and tell them what's going on we go to them with a certain understanding that, you know, like unless it's brought to our attention this is what's going to happen. And under, you know, like under the inside Long Island Parks, you know, it states that we're going to do certain things and when we don't do them then the constituent's are jumping all over us and rightfully so. And that's why we came and I thought this issue was resolved when we said what will it take to open all the parks get everything going right just the way we envisioned it when we did the budget last year. And then when, you know, you came back to us and said it will take this, this and this I looked into the fact through Budget Review there is money and there's still money and I don't know what line item, but -- it's 110 fund so that's four salaries. There's authorized positions and I thought that it wasn't a dead-end because when we called up the County Executive's Office the County Executive had said yes. His intention is to have all the parks reopened and he said that to the press even. He made that comment even in the State of the County address. So we've got the Executive wanting all the parks opened. We've got the Legislature wanting and thinking that all the parks are going to be opened full time, you know, back to running as we had envisioned when we did the budget last year. And then I've got constituents coming and screaming at me and that's actually they were very mad when they came to my office. And you know what looking at it, yes, rightfully so because I wasn't able to tell them that, no, we don't have camping there between certain days. What I meant when I said all the parks are going to be opened is only certain days and only certain parks. So basically, I gave misinformation.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Legislator Alden, the parks are not closed.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

Well, that park is closed for camping.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Yes, but it's open for hiking --

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

Right.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

The word is closed.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

Then I'd like to know, I'd like to know what and this goes back to the question we asked awhile ago. What will it take to open all the parks full time just like they were last year and the year before for camping all seven days and horseback riding?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

And I was asked that by the County Executive's Office and I told them I would need 16 additional bodies in order to open everything full time, but not 16 laborers. I need some experienced people in that mix also.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

So some of those people were supplied to you now how many more will it take --

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

I just said 16 people.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

In addition to what was supplied --

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Yes, six.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

-- before.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

So ten more.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

No. 16 more people.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Plus the six.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Yeah. Well, the six are already there.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

Now 16 is more than the authorized positions from last year.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Yes.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

But then why weren't we told when we were going through the budget last year that unless you budget this amount of money the parks are not going to be able to open up they're going to be curtailed?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

I don't remember exactly what I said, but I thought I probably made some reference to the situation. I don't remember my testimony exactly, Legislator Alden. And if I led you to believe otherwise I apologize. I didn't think that I was leading anybody to believe that.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

Unfortunately, you led me -- you did lead me to believe that, but I made statements to my constituents that they're all going to be opened and that's even the worst part because now I become the liar and I'm the one that is going to bear the brunt. And it's coming up very close to us; it's November it's not that far away. That's when they can determine whether they want Legislator Alden who gave them misinformation to represent them again. Or they want somebody else to represent them, you know, because they haven't given them misinformation. So it trickles down and I know that the specific questions were asked and I can go back and get the minutes. We were told that all the parks were going to be open fully. That's really what it boils down to. So I went out to the public and made those comments and then I was very, very shocked to have constituents in my office telling me that no you're a liar they're not opened on a full time basis. So now really we've got to get them opened again.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Well, when I -- after being out in the parks on the weekends this summer especially the 4th of July weekend I was around to various parks from Smith Point going east and I even questioned that I sat in front of this body and said six bodies were enough. I said to myself are you crazy. I was very concerned about the situation over the 4th of July weekend. Thankfully we made it through with no problems, but if I tell you the parks were packed the 4th of July. They were packed to the gills. We had people waiting on line, we had to turn people away because we just did not have enough space for them.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Why didn't you come to us then and say to the Legislature we have a major problem and you have to help me?

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

It's not six it's 22 people.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Legislator Fields, we've been involved in this alternative funding committee for what, a year now? You've been hearing this, you've been hearing this out of my mouth for since we've been talking about it. But that's the state of the parks now.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

So we went into the budget. We went into what would it take and that was your response. Now if you decided you were wrong, oh my the way, I was wrong I thought it was going to take six, but you know what, after reviewing it as Commissioner of Parks and understanding the whole thing I now need to come back to you and say to you, you know what, I was wrong and I need a lot more than six, how can you help me? And that's what this Legislature would do. If we knew that there was a problem all of us, I mean, I'm speaking on behalf of all of us. Did anyone else know that we still were closed?

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

No.

SPEAKER:

(inaudible)

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

You knew?

SPEAKER:

(inaudible)

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

But that was before.

SPEAKER:

Press release.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

No. The press release was dated May of 2003. It's dated May of 2003 and again, it's been on our website since then also.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Is it also on the sign at Blydenburgh Park that the park grounds are closed that the campgrounds are closed?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

It's not on the entrance sign, no.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Why would it not be on an entrance sign?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Well, we tell people in the campgrounds.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Why would you not have it listed -- when I drive my camp vehicle in there and I read right as I drive in this is not going to be open to me if I want to camp here a couple of days later.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Well, I think that could be negative publicity. I wouldn't want to put that on a front -- a sign at the front of the park.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

I think it would be honest. I think it's dishonest to say --

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Again, Legislator Fields, we're not trying to hide this from somebody. We're not trying to hide it from anybody.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

But you are if say it's negative publicity and I don't want to put that up there.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

We've done press releases that have appeared in the newspaper. It's on our website; we tell people in the campgrounds. We've handed out flyers at the campground.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

There's a book here that people pick up and if you look at it, are you familiar with this book?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Yes, I am.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

If you look at it it's got a whole thing about Blydenburgh and it tells the regular person who might pick this up and say I want to spend my money in Suffolk County that Blydenburgh is open seven days a week for campers. And then they drive to Blydenburgh with their camp vehicle and there's no sign saying, oh, by the way we don't really mean that it's open seven days for campers we are closed some days. So I think it would be disingenuous not to put it out there because there are people that don't necessarily read press releases or understand that and they assume when they pack up their vehicle that their going to go camping for how many days that would like to go.

And my second question is that if you have a man that's camping in that park who brings he's vehicle up from Florida, how much is he paying us to reside in that campground?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

He's not paying us and you know what we get a big bargain and we encourage that in all of our campgrounds. For the piddle little salary that we pay these people it's amazing that we fine people.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

How much is he paid? How much does he get paid?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Probably doesn't make any more than nine dollars an hour.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

For how many hours?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

35 hour week on the average.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

So he's working full time he's not part time.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Close to full time, yes. And what these people go through on a regular basis it's difficult to fine people out there to do these jobs.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

So are you saying then that there is -- would he be capable of overseeing the campgrounds?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

I don't think it's a safe situation to have a seasonal person run --

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Why?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

-- being the only person in that park for two days out of the week running the campgrounds.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Why though; why is it unsafe?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

A seasonal position?

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Why is it unsafe?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

They don't have the experience; they don't have the qualifications.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

As pertaining to what safety.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

How is one person going to deal with all of the issues that can arise in a campground.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Well, what's the safety issue? What is the problem with being unsafe? What could be unsafe?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

If you only have one person in the park and they're not even a full-time County employee.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Okay, but what could be unsafe? What's the unsafe part about it?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

But what if he's called into a situation there's nobody else there to deal with it. Or he's called into a situation and something else happens someplace else, you have one person?

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

So in other words -- he stays there with his wife? The unsafe part is that if there were an emergency let say somewhere else in Blydenburgh he can't pick up a phone and call the Park Police?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

That's one aspect. How is one individual going to clean the entire campground area? Clean the bathrooms; make sure the trash is picked up. Deal with the other issues in the park. You know you're being totally unrealistic.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

It was my understanding when I sat here and I asked what -- cause these people came to us along time ago and they said we're upset we'd like to not spend our money elsewhere. There were campers that came and said I don't have a lot of money, but now you're making me drive up state --

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

But we are providing seven day a week camping opportunities to the residents of Suffolk County. It's not as if we're not.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Legislator Carpenter.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

It seems to me that we need to have the availability of camping since it's such a short window of opportunity anyway; the season is so short. And I hear what you're saying that Blydenburgh is and lets just talk about Blydenburgh. It's a small park. There is the trailer that's parked there.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

600 acres at Blydenburgh.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

When I'm saying small I'm talking in terms of the camping facility.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Okay.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

What is it, 50 sites? 50 campsites?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Off the top of my head I'm not sure. I think it's more than that, but okay.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

I think we need to sit down and work on a way to have the campers available to be camping every day. Is the park employee -- when the person went there and found out that they couldn't camp there and had to leave on Monday or Sunday whenever they had to leave, who told them that?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

It was probably -- they probably were trying to stay Monday night.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

Okay. So who told them that?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

It could have been the seasonal person at -- in the campground. I don't know specifically.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

But it was stated that there was someone in the office so was that the seasonal person?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Yes. My impression was that there was more than one person in the office. There was a patron and a park employee.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

Okay. So the seasonal employee wasn't just a laborer who was walking around picking up litter. This person was in the office so it sort of lets you to think that -- what --

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

The incident as it was related to me was they were in their site, a person came up to them and said you have to leave. They went to the office and spoke to another person who said that --

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

Okay.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Okay. That could have been the scenario.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

So now we have two people at least who were there.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Right.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

And they're being told they have to leave, but these two people aren't leaving and aren't working that day they're still there. So now we know that there's two people there when campers aren't going to be there. Is someone of these two people or whoever is there keeping a record of how many campers we're turning away?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

I can't answer that. I would say probably, but I'm not specific, but I do know that when we made the schedule we looked at that. I mean, obviously, you know, obviously, open on the weekends because the greater demand is then and we're closed the days that we're closed because there's a lesser demand on those days. Does it mean that nobody comes to camp, absolutely not, but there is a lesser degree of demand on those days.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

I think it's very important if we've made a decision to close certain days of the week for an activity whatever it be, camping or anything else.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Camping, hunt -- we've cutback on hunting activities.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

Okay. We need to have that kind of feedback so that we know whether or not that was a good decision to make or not because --

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

We do that in the department. We talk to, you know, we again --

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

Yeah, but when I asked you if someone is recording that information on how many campers are being turned away you weren't sure. So if you weren't sure my guess would be that the person that's at the park is not keeping a log of how many people may have been turned away for camping. And that is important information that we should be capturing when we know whether or not it was a cost effective decision because if you're turning paying customers away then maybe we would have more resources. And I also would -- I don't know if I totally agree with the statement of -- on both sides about notifying people. I would not want to see a sign out on Vets. Highway, but I think there should be a small sign in the booth in Blydenburgh Park so that once someone pulls in --

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

I agree with you Legislator Carpenter and I thought there was and if there wasn't we absolutely should do that.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

Okay, because, you know, that really isn't fair; we're not informing people and that is less than honest.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Apparently, someone went to camp there and while camping they -- someone approached the vehicle where they were in for a couple of days and said, oh by the way you have to leave.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

Oh, I understand that now, but I'm just saying that if they pulled into the park, I'd be less upset if they new when they pulled in and set up their campsite on Friday, that there was a notice there that said that, you know, Monday they would have to leave Monday morning. So -- but that is not to whether or not we should try to find a way and I think that's important. I want to hear that we're finding ways to make sure we can instead of articulating reasons for why we can't. And I would suggest that we engage the Suffolk Committee for Camping. I would think that perhaps within that membership there may very well be people who have experience that you would feel comfortable with charging them with the responsibility of overseeing that. So that perhaps we could keep the parks open.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Well, actually, I'll bet we do find some employees at least on a seasonal basis from that organization.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

Right. Exactly, so, you know, I would just ask if you would, you know, sit down with them and try to find ways for us to be able accommodate the campers on a regular basis. To hear and this gentleman called my office also and to hear someone retired, you know, resident of the County who's camping with his grandchild, you know, we want to encourage that in anyway possible. And I'd love to know that we're doing that seven days a week. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Legislator Nowick.

LEGISLATOR NOWICK:

When the campers want to camp say at Blydenburgh, don't they call ahead of time and make a reservation or do they just --

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Not always.

LEGISLATOR NOWICK:

Oh, so you can just drive down there and pull up --

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Um'hum.

LEGISLATOR NOWICK:

Okay.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

(inaudible)

LEGISLATOR NOWICK:

And you don't have to make a reservation at Hither Hills?

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

They're taking a chance.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

If they have an opening you go right in.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

No. Where? Smith Point, I mean, even some people do drive up to Smith Point too.

LEGISLATOR NOWICK:

So they have to go out early and wait on line --

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Yes, they do.

LEGISLATOR NOWICK:

Okay.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

We've had and just as a point of information for you we've had a serious issue all summer long at Smith Point because of the bad weather that we had during the spring and because people weren't in the parks because of the bad weather the Piping Plovers took over a good portion of Smith Point Beach. And we have had to limit outer -- we have not been open for outer beach camping at Smith Point all summer and we've had to limit the outer beach daily activity because of the endangered species. And a good amount of staff time at Smith Point has been acting as traffic police to count the number of cars that go out on the beach. Go out on the beach and check to see that they're parked in the proper manner. It's been an unbelievable exercise all

summer long and probably not so much on the -- during the week, but on the weekends and it's taken up a lot of staff time and it's cost other things to slide in the park to some extent too. That's just a point of information.

LEGISLATOR NOWICK:

Well, I think Legislator Carpenter had an excellent idea because I can't even imagine how many campers are there during the week. I'm thinking to myself three or four people camp during the week, but I could really be off on that. So I think it would be important to know.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Oh, no. We have several people in the campgrounds during the week, several.

LEGISLATOR NOWICK:

And when you say several to me is five or six or is it 30 or 40?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

No. Hundreds and hundreds during the week --

LEGISLATOR NOWICK:

During the week.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

-- at all of our camp facilities. Oh, yes, during the week.

LEGISLATOR NOWICK:

Those statistics are going to be interesting.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Well, people -- many of these people will take their vacations camping in our park facilities.

LEGISLATOR NOWICK:

So if we left Blydenburgh open there is a possibility of having maybe a hundred campers during the week?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Well, no, not at Blydenburgh.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Fifty something.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

And it's probably I would say --

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

A hundred.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

-- maybe 15, I don't know. I'm picking a number out of the air. We don't have the demand necessarily during the week at Blydenburgh that we would have on the weekends or that we

have at other camp facilities.

LEGISLATOR NOWICK:

But that particular park, what will we need? Two seasoned employees to stay there to keep it open?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

I think at Blydenburgh, I told the County Executive's Office, we would need three additional people. A park supervisor, an automotive equipment operator and a laborer I believe that's --

LEGISLATOR NOWICK:

To keep those 15 people there during the week. Do we have money in the 110 line to do something like that?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

I don't believe we do now.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Sean, do you have any indication of what we have in the budget? Lance?

MR. REINHEIMER:

The Budget Review Office on a regular basis does payroll projection for the whole County. The last one that was done was based on the July 6th payroll, which shows the Parks Department has a surplus of \$245,000. In addition to that as of 7/20 I think they have 22 current vacancies.

LEGISLATOR NOWICK:

It sounds -- I don't know. Does this sound too simple? We can hire the people; we have the money?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Many of those vacancies are golf course. I would venture to guess 21 or those 22 vacancies are golf course employees that the water quality protection the 477 fund that we're still in the process of hiring?

MR. REINHEIMER:

No. They're in appropriation 7110.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Which is what, Lance?

MR. REINHEIMER:

The regular Parks appropriation.

LEGISLATOR NOWICK:

So we can -- we have the money to hire three people to open up Blydenburgh if we find that there are enough of the citizens using the park?

MR. REINHEIMER:

Absolutely.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:
(inaudible)

LEGISLATOR NOWICK:
Well, for safety reason though.

MR. REINHEIMER:
There's sufficient funds to hire three people today.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:
This is like déjà vu. This is the same question I asked months ago.

LEGISLATOR NOWICK:
That takes care of the money issue.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:
Madam Chair, I would --

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:
Legislator Alden first, Legislator Cooper second, Legislator --

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:
I don't have a question I just have a quick comment. I'd imagine the Commissioner would want to fill these positions, but I think what is happening is at the Executive's Budget Office or somewhere here in Hauppauge not down in West Sayville they're preventing these positions from being filled.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:
Well, he had a press conference that said he was reopening them so I can't imagine why he would be preventing them.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:
Legislator Alden, Legislator Cooper.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:
Just to put to rest to a comment that was made earlier about, I guess, resources being diverted from one area to another area in the parks that doesn't seem to be the case. I would hope it wasn't, but do we allocate more resources to golf or, you know do we take away from the camping and allocate resources to golf, do we do that?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:
No, Legislator Alden. I'm not going to sit here and say that we do that.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:
Thankfully we don't, good.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:
We try to provide for all of our user groups.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

Okay, good.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

We may not satisfy them to the extent that they would like to be satisfied, but we try to and we do not favor one group over another.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

Okay, good. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Legislator Cooper and then Legislator Carpenter had something else to say I think, right?

LEGISLATOR COOPER:

I just wanted a clarification on one point. You're saying that at peak times of the year, July 4th week for example, they're campgrounds that are opened seven days and other times of the year only open five days, is that correct?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Um'hum. It's difficult to follow the schedule.

LEGISLATOR COOPER:

But how is it that you have the personnel to safely --

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Overtime. We keep people in and on overtime.

LEGISLATOR COOPER:

So it's not that you hire additional seasonal for these periods.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

No.

LEGISLATOR COOPER:

And so the reason that you don't put the employees on overtime the other weeks is that you feel that you don't have sufficient campers at the campgrounds to warrant it economically.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Well, we also don't have sufficient overtime, but you know the overtime will just go so far. You can't have somebody work all summer long seven days a week. I mean, we'll burn them out very quickly doing something like that, but our overtime -- but we have to live within the overtime budget that we have also. And we are and I know I may sound like a broken record, but we do have an issue with the Park Police. And we are spending an inordinate amount of money on overtime for Park Police just to provide -- just to have minimal coverage on all of our shifts for Park Police, but at this time of the year it's critically important to do that.

LEGISLATOR COOPER:

Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Legislator Carpenter.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

To the question of how many campers are at Blydenburgh during the week. A number of time last summer when we had a break between committees I drove over to Blydenburgh and through Blydenburgh and through the campground areas. And I would say the guess of about 15 is pretty accurate campers that were there maybe less.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Are you asking me that question, Legislator Carpenter?

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

No. I'm just telling you from my observation --

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Okay.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

-- that, you know, it was probably a dozen or less occupied sites during the week.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Um'hum. We may have some indication of that in the office. I just didn't come equipped with that today.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

At \$14 a night that comes out to about \$220 every time they're told no to stay there per day I guess. So it's 440 that the County's losing per week.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Well, you have additional expenses involved with that too. One of the huge expenses that we have in our campgrounds is garbage. I mean, we haul out an inordinate amount of garbage out of the campgrounds. And I'm not picking specifically on Blydenburgh that's throughout the campground system.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

You know when you go over to the Fire Island National Seashore and I'm not suggesting this, but it's a thought. There are signs that tell you that you're welcome to come in, but that you need to bring out your garbage with you.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

I have thought about that Legislator Fields so often and I've been in state park facilities upstate where they do that. I just don't think on Long Island that would happen.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

It happens on Long Island at the Fire Island National Seashore.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

And I don't think they get near anywhere near the number of patrons that we get.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Oh yes, they do.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

I don't know.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

I can go to Talisman on a Saturday and on a Sunday and they're 125 boaters who anchor and walk up on the beach at the picnic tables and utilize the bathrooms and there are hundreds of people along that beach.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Well, at Smith Point County Park we have thousands.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

I'm just saying at Blydenburgh if you were to have --

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

I don't know how you can do it. I mean, maybe it might be something to consider as an experiment at one location over another. I mean, that's certainly worthwhile thinking about.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Why not? I mean, if we heard testimony from this camper who stated that he literally brings his black bag of garbage home.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Yes. And I was going to say he deserves a gold medal and I think we should recognize him for that.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

But I as a beach goer -- as a boater use to bring my camping stuff on a weekend and cook out and have lots of garbage and dump it in the garbage pail. And then I was told no longer would they pick up garbage and I bring a bag with me and I bring it back on my boat and I bring it home and I throw it away. I don't throw it on the sand I don't throw it on the beach and I would think that when people want to utilize a particular park. They are -- we're doing it everywhere. You're seeing it everywhere. I think, you know, that -- if that's the reason that you can't reopen Blydenburgh or one of the reasons then perhaps there's a sign that can be placed saying bring your garbage home with you. Don't leave it here. If you want to see our park kept open and you want to utilize our park you have to, you know, help us.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Well, that as I said that might be something to consider doing as an experimental thing at one of our facilities and it's also something that maybe we could engage the Suffolk Community -- Committee for Camping to help us with also.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

If I could, that is exactly what I was going to say when I suggested that we work with them to get that kind of feedback from them and ideas from them on how they could see, you know, cutting cost if you will.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Um'hum.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

I think Blydenburgh might be a good spot to try the experiment if you will or pilot --

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Garbage in garbage out?

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

Yes. And if not seven days a week maybe during the week you don't have as many campers there. And I'd be interested in getting that feedback from the Suffolk Committee for Camping how they think their members would react to that, you know, kind of thing.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

We will talk to them about that.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

Campers are really very resilient and very protective of the parks and the environment in wanting to --

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Oh, for the most part you are absolutely right and we would not be able to do a lot of the things that we do without their assistance.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

Exactly. And I think especially during the week you're less likely to get the occasional camper who might not have that appreciation that the regular camper that does it all the time does and might be their for the week. So, you know, again, if you could.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Um'hum. I did just bring some information with me today that I'm not necessarily hand out to you right now, but before I leave I want to make sure you have it. It's just -- and we've been going through this process with this alternative funding report, which by the way we hope to have back to you in September. And it's just -- and our list are active parks, the acreage involved. What the staff was in 1979; what the staff we have -- what the staff is now and what we really need in the park. So I just wanted to drop that off to you.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Do you see anyway before Labor Day that we can open these parks the other two days a week?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

To be perfectly honest with you Legislator Fields no, because one of the issues is, I would like to have more supervision, and those are competitive Civil Service titles. We would need to look for people and it's July 31st. today, Labor Day is September 1st. I just don't think we have enough time to fine people. If we had people within the system somewhere, you know, it maybe possible. I mean, that work for us perhaps on a part-time basis, but I don't even think that

that's the case.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Even on a voluntary basis?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

I wouldn't want to reopen a facility with volunteers.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

I have to correct something that's been said. It's not two days a week it's three days a week.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Right. I'm sorry. Right.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

Okay.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

You're correct.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

So they're only open four days a week.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Yes. It's three nights. Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

Perhaps there could be some reallocation of your resources of your personnel --

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Legislator Carpenter, you know, I have -- we've gone over this in the department, you know, we're short everywhere. We're short in operations; we're short in the maintenance area. We're short in the Park Police, you know, I can't, I just can't get blood out of a stone. Believe me, we've been over this issue adnauseam since last probably last November. I just don't see anyway without going out and hiring experienced people.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Why couldn't you hire the people?

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

Could you -- do you have access to those people.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

I don't think we have enough time to find them between now and Labor Day. And you know you could reopen Blydenburgh, you know, next week you'll get a phone call well what about Cathedral Pines and what about Southaven. Those are my favorite locations. You know I think it's kind of unfair to pick one location necessarily over another.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

Which of the campgrounds that are open seven days a week all summer?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Indian Island, Cedar Point, Sear Bellows and Smith Point. Also we have the outer beach, Cupsoque, Shinnecock East and Theodore Roosevelt County Park in Montauk.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

So it seems that the West End --

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Oh, I'm sorry, Meschutt also.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

It seems that the West End is being adversely impacted then because the West End ones are the ones that are not. West Hills

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Well, there are lighter -- that's because they're lighter because the demand is not as great as it is for the locations that I just mentioned.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

Right.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

So I think the justification maybe perhaps for one of them might be there because you don't have any in the West End of the County that are open seven days a week. So perhaps we could look at opening either West Hills or Blydenburgh which ever would be the easiest one for you to reopen. And then do the pilot of, you know, saying, you know, during the week when we have less staff, you know, garbage in garbage out. You know what you take in what you bring in you take out. I don't know if I'd publicize short of staff, but I would, you know, just ask that.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Well, we can certainly look into that.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

I would ask you if you could at least look into Blydenburgh based on the fact that it is a small campsite. That it is located in a westerly location and that that's the campsite that apparently quite a few people have called all of the different Legislators that have stated that today. And based on the fact that there's \$245,000 surplus and that we're 22 vacancies in the Park budget and in two weeks I think we have another meeting and I would ask that you could give us a status report of where you're at.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Certainly.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

And in the interim perhaps meet with the Campground Advisory -- Camping Advisory group just to see if there's something that might be very easy and would be very helpful.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

We've talked to the chair of that organization probably that close to a daily basis.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Is that Skip Armstrong?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Yes. Skip Armstrong.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

He wanted to be here today too because he was upset about it and had called me and said that he had to stay at work, but he's upset about it too. So I would hope that before the next meeting you sit with him and whoever else to see it there's some kind of resolve before the summer is over when we don't need the campgrounds in the fall or in the winter. The next -- we have four things on this discussion the Little Red School House, Suffolk Trap and Skeet and then NYCONN Park and then we'll move to the agenda. So if you can give us --

LEGISLATOR BISHOP:

(inaudible)

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

That's part of our agenda, Dave.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

On the Little Red School House I did get an opinion out of the County Attorney's Office and they believe that it should be considered as dedicated parkland. So we are, you know, we couldn't enter into any kind of a lease agreement with any organization. I have not -- the person at the Suffolk County Cooperative Library System he and I keep missing each other since I got the opinion from the County Attorney's. So I'm not sure which direction they're interested in going, but I do intend to speak to him. If they decide that they are not interested based with -- because of the perimeters with which we would be able to deal with them which would be a license agreement on a shorter term basis, you know, we'll have to look for somebody else to come into that building.

And in terms of the repairs what the plans is is that once the current tenant moves out which we still do not have a specific date from them, but it will probably be sometime this fall. That's when, oh, a crew will go into the building and start addressing some of the situations that need to be addressed.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

What about the stoop, can't that be done before they move out?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

I don't think the stoop is necessary. I don't think that there's anything in the building that is unsafe currently. And I think that we are okay until the tenant leaves. Certainly, if something happened between now and then that caused an unsafe situation we would definitely address it right away.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

All right, so maybe another report in a couple of weeks to see if you have more information. Suffolk Trap and Skeet, I had asked awhile ago about the dirt that's piled up there and where we're at.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Yes. The cleanup still has not been completed and there are a couple of issues that we need to deal with, but I think that that situation should be taken care of by this fall. I'm hopeful that we can get that finished by the fall this year.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Who will remove that?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Probably we will do it. It's where we take it and there's still a question, I believe, the last time that the material was tested by the Health Department was two years ago. And we're not sure whether it need to be tested again and that maybe an issue, but if it does -- if it is we will do that and, you know, we'll take the proper precautions to dispose of it.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Could you make a note though to find out about who tests it and where it's going to be located because I've asked that question I think for quite some time now and you still weren't sure then.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Yes. We're in the process of addressing it Legislator Fields it's not that I'm ignoring the situation, we are. And in terms of the RFP, I think as, you know, there's \$500,000 in the '04 capital budget for that facility. And I think what we need to do is decide what we're going to be doing with that \$500,000 before we go out with a new RFP so that anybody coming in as a proposer has a clear indication of what their responsibilities would be as opposed to the County responsibilities. I'm not sitting here and saying that we need to spend the money before we can issue a new RFP, but I think we have to have it clear indication of how we're going to use it. And we have already -- DPW has engaged, has a consultant ready to design a sound mitigation wall or whatever, but I think the question is right now that it is '04 capital money. And I'm not sure whether we can proceed with it this year; we may have to wait until January before we can spend that money, but we have looked for a consultant engineer and we found one and they are ready to begin the process. I would be happy to report back again in two weeks on where we are with that.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Okay. Thank you. NYCONN Park. We discussed the landscape architect and --

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

We like to call it Greens Creek.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Okay. Greens Creek -- Greens Creek County Park is that what you're calling it?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Where are you on that?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

DPW went out to bid; they did receive bids back. The low bid is well within the budget and they are in the process of making the award hopefully, to the low bidder. And I would expect that that work could probably begin in the fall, probably the latter part of the fall.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

And what about the fragmities?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Well, that the cost of the fragmities removal I think was the removal and the filling back in again I believe was approximately \$300,000 which that wasn't even the improvements to the facility. It was just to remove the fragmities the way we would like to see them removed. And that was not within the budget; we don't have the money to do that, but we have been going over there and trying to mow as much as possible. The thing that I was concerned about was spending all this money on improvements and having the fragmities grown all over it. We don't think that that's going to be the case.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Okay. I guess that would be it. Do you have anything else that you want tell us about?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

No. I told you about Smith Point.

LEGISLATOR BISHOP:

I have something.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

There's a special event at Sagtikos Manor on August 16th. It's a revolutionary encampment and it's the Sagtikos Manor Historical Society is doing that for us and we'd like to see people come that that event.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Legislator Alden.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

I just want to congratulate you on a very successful and well received reopening of the Blue Course at Timber Point.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Yes. We had the reopening of the Blue Course at Timber Point the official reopening. We also in July had a special event again with one of our historical organizations. The Bayport Heritage had a program at Meadow Croft where we dedicated, we finally finished the restoration of the historic Auto House on the grounds there. And that was a grant that we've had for probably at least six years that we finally completed so we were real happy about that.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

Just a comment on Blue Course. It's interesting because there's been so much buzz about it

amongst golfers want to play it. You know it's almost like Suffolk County's answer to Bethpage Black, but the feedback has been incredible it really has.

LEGISLATOR BISHOP:

That what -- I was trying to get your attention to note. I played that course ever Sunday morning. I get up at 4:30 to play it and, you know, golfers can be a very whiney group. They can complain about the weather --

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

Are you talking about Bethpage Black or Timber Blue?

LEGISLATOR BISHOP:

Timber Point. They can complain about the weather their own play and of course the course, but the reaction to this course has been so positive. When you're there everybody is just raving about it. The people don't want to talk about it to others because they want to keep it a secret.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

(inaudible)

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

I just want to put you all on notice too; we're not finished over there. So we're going to becoming back, you know, asking for additional monies. So now the challenge is that we need to maintain it also.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

I just also heard the other day that one of the golf magazines is doing a feature story on it.

LEGISLATOR BISHOP:

There's one in Newsday today also.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Oh, it is?

LEGISLATOR BISHOP:

On the sport pages of Newsday there's a story, very positive.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

Oh yeah, Tuesday I think.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

Dave Bishop, Legislator Bishop actually has been talking about restoring it to its 18 magnificent hole original layout. But isn't it Bethpage Black once you cross the road after the first hole? Isn't that in Suffolk County?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

I think there's a few holes -- no, the Bethpage Black I think has a few holes in Suffolk County.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

Once you cross Townline Road? Isn't it once you cross Townline Road?

SPEAKER:
(inaudible)

COMMISSIONER GORDON:
Yeah. And I don't know the dividing --

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:
I think there's more like five or six.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:
Okay. We're going to move on to the resolutions on the agenda.

TABLED RESOLUTIONS

IR 1404 To amend the user fee schedule for Suffolk County Parks. (County Executive)
I'm going to make a motion to table.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:
Second.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:
Could I make a comment?

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:
Yes.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:
I would like to -- I would ask the indulgence of the Chair if maybe at the next meeting we could have this as an agenda item to discuss?

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:
Sure. Duly noted. All in favor? Opposed? Tabled. **(Vote: 6-0)**

IR 1406 To implement RFP Committee for Concessionaire Program at County Parks. (Postal)

COMMISSIONER GORDON:
And I'm asking that to be tabled one more cycle. I've talked to the Presiding Officer's office about it.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:
Motion to table.

LEGISLATOR COOPER:
Second.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:
All in favor? Opposed? Tabled. **(Vote: 6-0)**

IR 1529 Naming the ball field at Citibank Park “Senator Owen H. Johnson Field”. (County Executive) We had some question and that’s why this was tabled the last time. All right, so for purposes of discussion we have a motion and a second. Legislator Alden.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

Is this going to impact on any of our agreements that we had for the naming rights for the park?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

I am under the impression, no, because it’s just the name of the field it’s not the park because I believe that that was something that DPW questioned right away because they oversee that agreement.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

Ceremonial.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

But we don’t know that for a sure. We were supposed to find that out for certain.

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

No. I was told that’s the case. It would not impede any of the existing agreements.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

If that’s the case then, you know, I think it’s a real good idea.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

It’s to play ball. It’s not the structure; it’s not, you know, the whole entity it’s the field.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

We did it over at the -- for my football and baseball coach at Islip, Freddie (inaudible) Field, but it’s, you know, there’s still a larger name on the field, but we just don’t want to impose on or where we’d actually violate or void any of the contractual obligations because we still need the stream of money coming in there. But I thinks it’s very, very appropriate to put Senator Johnson there.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Well, we have a note from Paul Sabatino who has had a recent surgical procedure who states that --

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

I gave him an excused absence at a prior committee.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Right. It should be tabled. Still have not received consent from Citibank and so I’m going to make a motion to table till we know for sure that we have all of the necessary -- everything is in place so that we can have a ballpark with a ball field.

LEGISLATOR COOPER:

On the motion.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Yes.

LEGISLATOR COOPER:

I just have a philosophical problem with naming opportunities like this because it's not like a wealthy benefactor that's donating funds or a business that's donating funds in return for some recognition. This is not Senator Johnson's money. It's New York State taxpayers --

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

I'm sorry, but in case you didn't know and I know you've been here for X number of years, but just from a historical perspective if not for Senator Johnson following up on this and actually fighting very hard for it, it wouldn't have happened.

LEGISLATOR COOPER:

So you're saying the ball field itself?

MANY SPEAKERS:

(inaudible)

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

May I say something? As far as a lot of Legislators, you know, Angie --

LEGISLATOR COOPER:

The point I was going to make was I've gotten a lot of funding for a lot of non-profit organizations and museums what have you and if offered I would never think of accepting a naming opportunity. It's not appropriate --

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

We'll never name anything after you Legislator Cooper.

LEGISLATOR COOPER:

-- because it's not my money. So I mean, if they want to name this after the taxpayers of New York that's one thing. Now if you're saying that if he went well beyond the pale and we would not have had this field without him then that's something else, but I just have a problem with naming opportunities being named after elected officials. Because it takes away the potential for this field to be named for a private corporation and generating additional revenue for the County.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

May I?

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Yeah. Legislator Carpenter.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

Senator Johnson when he was first approached about this and I know because I was the one that asked him. You know for years we saw money coming to projects like the Aquatic Center in Nassau County and we never really had anything of that nature that was funded in large measure by the state in Suffolk County. And going back to the mid 90's when I was first elected there

was a proposal for a ballpark and it was going to be done by a private developer and that didn't happen. So I approach Senator Johnson and set up a meeting with the County Executive and his representatives and the Parks person at the time. And he was very interested and existed about it and really had to fight to get that funding and the commitment was for \$14 million and that was exactly what he was able to deliver on. And there was a lot of competition and there were a lot of people from upstate who have, you know, other Legislators who have projects that they wanted to see move forward. And there is this erroneous conception upstate that we are the land of the rich and famous down here and that those kinds of dollars should not be used down here.

So he really did have a tough fight for this and absent that steadfast commitment and originally was going to be Pilgrim and then the site had to be relocated. And we came out, you know, up with the present site because of the fact that we were able to use the parking of the courthouse and not have to build parking. There were a lot of things that happened along the way a lot of bumps in the road and he steered around that and we have that ballpark which for anyone who has been there and you see the families and you see the enthusiasm. I mean, we are taking the credit as members of this wonderful County for that facility and I think this ceremonial naming of a field is the very least we can do for the Senator.

LEGISLATOR COOPER:

I wouldn't know Senator Johnson if I bumped into him. I never met the individual, but he was simply doing his job and I fought very hard for Knolls Park in East Northport. It was my first open space parkland acquisition \$8.2 million acquisition. Fought hard for it for six months; I had to work with the town, with the community and with my colleagues in the Legislature to build support for it. And it would have been entirely {unappropriate} for me to I felt to accept a naming opportunity. They want to name a baseball field at Knolls --

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Jon Cooper Dog Run, right.

LEGISLATOR COOPER:

Well, actually when I met with some residents afterwards they said, "John they should name this Jon Cooper Memorial Park" and I said, I think you have to be dead for a memorial park, but it still is the thought. And I said, --

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

I thought you were making a suggestion, John.

LEGISLATOR COOPER:

No, no, they were supporters of mine, but I appreciated the thought behind it.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

The acknowledgement.

LEGISLATOR COOPER:

The acknowledgement, but it was inappropriate. So if I was Senator Johnson, and I don't know the gentleman, I would have said thanks very much for the thought. But you know what if there's another naming opportunity here to name the field after an individual or company better offer it out 50,000 bucks naming opportunity and maybe CA will give you 50,000 bucks to have it named CA field and we'll generate \$50,000 for County coffers. So I just wanted to say nothing against Senator Johnson, I'm sure he's a wonderful guy, but he was only doing his job. He was

paid to do his job; he wasn't a volunteer and I just think it's inappropriate to name naming opportunities after elected officials that are simply doing their job.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

Well, just to -- I understand --

LEGISLATOR COOPER:

Unless they're dead.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

I understand what you're saying; philosophically, you know, you're making a good argument and I can agree with a lot of what you're saying, but he wasn't just doing his job. Therein lies the difference, you know, when the request was made as I'm sure there, you know, given requests all of the time it took a lot more than that, you know. And I hear what you're saying; I agree with what you're saying and had there not been the kind of commitment that there was on his part for this I would more likely probably go with you and not support the naming of something like that.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

But we have not received consent from Citibank so that's my only thing for holding this off. We don't know for sure what this is -- if this is a legal -- I think I'd rather have us just table this for two weeks. In two weeks we'll have our Counsel and maybe we can ask the Commissioner if we can get in writing that we have received consent from Citibank to do that. Okay?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

I'd be happy to follow up for you.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Yeah.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

Personally, I'd like to see this passed out today and we can table it in the general session if everything isn't, you know, all copacetic or whatever you want to call it, but I think we can actually have that by Tuesday so I'd like to see it proceed.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

I don't see the --

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

Otherwise what's happening is --

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

He's not dying and he's not --

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

No. But you know what the ball season last only so long and by the time we're all done with this stuff and everything.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

No. We still have two weeks.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

If we keep postponing it so what are you going to have a January 1st dedication of the field? I don't think that's right.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

No. We have two weeks.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

I think we order just do it now and Tuesday we'll have the, you know, hopefully we'll have and if not we'll table it on the floor. Motion to approve.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

We have a motion and a second to approve.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

All in favor? Opposed?

LEGISLATOR COOPER:

Opposed.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Approved. **(Vote: 5-1 Opposed: Cooper)** Let me just, I lost my agenda.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

But I think you need to put on the record --

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Go ahead.

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

That you'll have the information on Tuesday.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Yeah. And just make sure though that when we have our meeting on Tuesday, can you get that for us?

COMMISSIONER GORDON:

I will try to do that for you, yes.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Okay. Thank you.

IR 1535 Appropriating funds in connection with improvements Van Bourgondien County Park (CP 7077). (Bishop) Legislator Carpenter makes the motion. Legislator Foley seconds. All in favor? Opposed? That's approved. **(Vote: 6-0)**

(Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:06 P. M.)

{ } denotes spelled phonetically)